**Level 2 Proposal Requirements**

The SSRI provides financial support to increase the quantity and quality of interdisciplinary research by Penn State faculty members. Our proposal review process is evaluative (we provide consultation for developing proposals that meet NIH standards) and developmental (we are invested in supporting faculty members to initiate research programs that can attract external funding). Our faculty’s success at winning external funding provides the resource foundation for a sustainable pilot grant program. Toward this end we offer consultation as you develop your proposal, prior to its submission. We strongly encourage you to access this opportunity if you are new to SSRI's seed funding programs or have not been funded by SSRI in recent years. You can do so by contacting SSRI Associate Director, [Dr. Danielle Downs](mailto:dsd11@psu.edu), or sending an email to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu).

The Level 2 mechanism is primarily designed to assist PSU social science faculty at University Park and the College of Medicine to advance their research by securing extramural funding. Although research teams can include students, post docs, faculty from other institutions and other external collaborators, our goal is to support interdisciplinary teams from Penn State's faculty. For this reason, team leaders should be tenure track or research faculty with continuing appointments.

* Level 2 proposals may be submitted at any time during the year
* Level 2 funding is designed to support research projects with specific research questions, a well-conceived theoretical basis, an identified team of Penn State faculty collaborators, and the potential to gain external funding
* Level 2 proposals are between $5,000 and $20,000
* For projects greater than $20,000, please consult with the SSRI Associate Director or Director
* Requests for a course release for the PI at the rate of $7,500 only during the semester in which the external grant is prepared/submitted will be considered under special circumstances and requires pre-approval from the SSRI Director or an Associate Director and the Department Head of the PI.  Please note that internal Penn State seed funds do not support faculty salaries because time for research is already accounted for in their institution-based salary.
* The SSRI Director, Associate Directors, relevant college Associate Deans, and 2-3 external reviewers with expertise on the topic review Level 2 proposals
* Feedback on funding is typically given within 4-6 weeks from the date of submission (please note that proposals receiving a revise and resubmit may take longer for a final decision on funding)
* Funds are allocated for a 12-24 month period

Level 2 funding support will be provided for:

* Innovative interdisciplinary research, training, and integrated research-outreach projects that involve collaborations involving Penn State faculty
* Innovative workgroups or conferences that might include outside speakers and consultants
  + Note: The SSRI supports conferences only when they are specifically designed to enhance faculty expertise, thereby leading to new research. Proposals for conferences must indicate the expected date and specify that other sources of conference funding have already been explored.
* Travel, consultants, graduate student time (but not tuition), or hourly support of activities
  + Note: Special guidelines for international travel
    - Funds will be provided for only one investigator
    - Funds will not be provided for graduate students
    - Proposals must include a letter of support from the international collaborator(s) outlining his/her role in the project

Level 2 funds are NOT intended to support:

* Student (masters, dissertation research) or post-doctoral projects
* New or ongoing projects of individual faculty or any on-going programs or research activities
* Delivery of outreach programs or services
* Funding for the kinds of activities supported by departments and colleges (travel to conferences, seed money for an individual's project, software purchase, etc.)
* Summer salaries
* Projects involving a Penn State faculty member and external collaborators only; our goal is to build and support Penn State teams
* Publication costs

Criteria for Review

* Priority is placed on new ideas for projects that involve cross-department and/or cross-college (interdisciplinary) connections among Penn State faculty
* A well-articulated plan of activities to include appropriate literature review, clear objectives and detailed methodology
* Teams comprised of investigators who range in discipline, seniority, and experience
* Proposals must include a specific product (e.g., external grant proposal; workshop and conference; or training activities) and a timeline for its attainment
* Proposals must make a clear contribution to social science
* Proposals must provide strong evidence for access to the population of interest

Structure and Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be submitted as one document via email to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu). To complete your proposal submission, you must download, complete, and email the forms below:

[Proposal Submission Form](https://ssri.psu.edu/sites/ssri/files/2021-06/Revised%20Level%202%20Proposal%20Form%20Jun2021.doc) (doc)

For research that involves primary data collection or the use of secondary data, investigators are expected to prepare and submit the appropriate requests for IRB approval.

Other Ideas to Consider as You Construct Your Level 2

* Consult with the SSRI Director or Associate Director about your project. The SSRI Director and Associate Director are happy to review an early draft of your proposal before you submit it formally
* Talk with any of the SSRI unit directors (Geographic Information Analysis (GIA), Survey Research Center (SRC), Social, Life, and Engineering Sciences Imaging Center (SLEIC), and Methodological Consulting Center) about how you might use the expertise of their units to enhance your research
* If you need time and funding to network, organize your team, or further develop your research ideas, consider applying for an [SSRI Level 1](https://ssri.psu.edu/funding/ssri-level-1-funding)

Project Reports

Investigators are expected to provide an annual project status update and a brief (one page) final report upon completing the project. These materials allow us to track and report outcomes as well as monitor the success of our seed grant program.

If you need to make changes to the project team, description, design, or budget during the course of your projects, please send a request to [ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu](mailto:ssri-seed-grant@psu.edu) with the specific details of these changes.